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FISH FOR BREAKFAST--AND WHY NOT ?

By Kathryn L. Osterhaug*

Fish for breakfast--and why not? Is there anything incongruous about serving a broiled fillet preceded by a chilled grapefruit and accompanied by a stack of toast and a pot of steaming coffee? The sports-fisherman knows the delicious possibilities of pan-broiled freshly-caught trout for breakfast. Why not give the jaded appetites of the home-folks a lift with a similar succulent morsel? Perhaps the reason that those few minutes extra sleep seem preferable to breakfast is that the breakfast menu has become drab and monotonous. Orange juice, toast and coffee has become standard fare for large groups of our population. Probably as a result of this has developed the habit of a mid-morning pick-up, usually consisting of a sweet roll and more coffee. Half the day gone and only a minute amount of the daily nutritional requirements have been satisfied.

Isn't that an absurd state of affairs when at least half of the day's work is done during the morning hours? One group of people who do not follow this breakfast plan is the farmers. They eat hearty breakfasts including foods high in protein because they KNOW they need it.

More and more emphasis is being placed on the value of ample amounts of protein in the diet. Doctors have found that wounds heal more quickly and that people have more resistance to infection when their diets are high in protein. Another result of protein in the diet is a sense of well-being, said to be directly attributable to the maintenance of a high blood sugar level. The lack of protein in the morning meal probably accounts for that mid-morning let-down of which we have spoken, for investigators have found this to be a characteristic aftermath of meals which are high in carbohydrate and low in high quality protein.

Nutritionists agree that from one-fourth to one-third of the daily food requirements should be eaten at the morning meal. This does not refer alone to the energy requirements, but includes the other food essentials such as vitamins, minerals, and proteins.

The problem of the homemaker or meal planner, then, is to provide her family with a satisfying breakfast which supplies the essential food factors, pleases the palate, and is still economical. The national standby of bacon and eggs is all very well, but some people find that such a breakfast dish is too rich and, in any case, the possibilities for variety are strictly limited.

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Aside from nutritive value, what is required of a good breakfast dish? Probably the most important requirements are ease and speed of preparation. Breakfast dishes should have mild but distinctively pleasant flavors; the ingredients should be easily available and economical. What other protein food not already commonly used for breakfast fulfills these requirements better than fish?

Fish is a high-quality protein food abundantly supplied with vitamins and minerals. The average individual serving of a seafood supplies one-quarter or more of the daily protein requirements. Fish are good sources of the B vitamins, thiamine, riboflavin, and niacin, and certain species are particularly valuable for their A and D vitamin content. Herring and sardines are good sources of vitamin D, and the roe of fish is an excellent source of vitamin A. Seafoods in general are well known for their ability to supply the essential minerals, iodine, iron, and copper.

In addition to nutritional qualifications, fish have other important advantages as breakfast dishes. They cook rapidly and, when fresh and properly handled, have a delicate yet distinctive flavor. The economy of fish depends to some extent on the skill and judgment of the purchaser. Most people have become accustomed to, and demand, only a few species of fish which are comparatively scarce, and which, therefore, demand a higher price. If the homemaker were to shop around, she would find any number of less well-known but equally delicious fish and at a lower price than she is accustomed to paying. Even the inland markets may now boast a large variety of constantly available seafood due to the rapid development of the quick-freezing industry and to the growth of the otter trawl fishery.

When first confronted with the idea of fish for breakfast, one may wonder how to fit them into the more or less standardized breakfast menu. Codfish cakes, kippered herring, and finnan haddie have long been accepted breakfast fare in certain localities and by certain groups of people, so the fish for breakfast idea is not really new and strange. A few sample menus and recipes may serve as an inducement for serving seafood at breakfast, and when the success of the introduction merits it, the housewife will continue its use and will herself employ fish to create a variety of breakfast dishes.

Breakfast Menus

Fresh Raspberries

Cream

Broiled Small Rockfish Fillets

Buttered New Potatoes

Melba Toast

Coffee

Recipes

Broiled Small Rockfish Fillets
(Serves six)

2 pounds small rockfish fillets
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
¼ cup melted fat
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Paprika

Sprinkle fillets on both side with salt and pepper and let stand for ten minutes to absorb the salt. Lay the fillets on a preheated greased broiler pan. Brush the surface with a mixture of the melted fat and lemon juice. Sprinkle with paprika. Place the fish in broiling oven about two inches from the heat, cook three to five minutes or until slightly browned. Turn and repeat the process. When browned remove to heated platter and serve.

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Breakfast Menus (Cont.)

Pineapple and Grapefruit Juice

Clam-Corn Griddle Cakes

Bacon

Coffee

Sliced Fresh Peaches on Cornflakes

Cream

Fish Flakes in Ramekins

Whole Wheat Muffins

Butter Honey

Coffee

Chilled Grapefruit & Orange Sections

Kedgeree

Cornbread

Butter Raspberry Jam

Coffee

Apple Sauce

Sablefish Hash

Crisp Toast

Butter Apricot Jam

Coffee

Recipes (Cont.)

Clam-Corn Griddle Cakes

1 one-half pound can minced clams, drained
¾ cup sifted all-purpose flour
½ cup yellow corn meal
2½ teaspoons baking powder
1 egg, beaten ½ teaspoon salt
Liquor from clams plus enough milk to make ¾ cup liquid
3 tablespoons melted fat

Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Combine the clams, egg, liquid, and melted fat, add to the dry mixture all at once and mix until all the flour has been moistened but not until the batter is smooth. Bake as regular griddle cakes and serve with butter or substitute.

Fish Flakes in Ramekins
(Serves six)

2 cups cooked fish, flaked
4 tablespoons melted shortening
4 tablespoons flour
½ teaspoon salt ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
2 cups top milk
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
½ cup flaked cereal, crushed

Blend melted shortening, flour, salt, and nutmeg in a saucepan. Stir in the milk and cook until thickened. Add the fish flakes, lemon juice and eggs, place in individual oiled casseroles or custard cups, cover with crushed cereal and bake 20 minutes in a 350° F. oven.

Kedgeree

2 cups flaked smoked fish
2 cups fluffy cooked rice
4 chopped, hard-cooked eggs
1/3 cup butter or substitute
1/2 cup top milk
1/8 teaspoon pepper Salt to taste

Combine all ingredients and heat in the top of a double boiler. Serves 4 to 6.

Sablefish Hash

2½ cups flakes, cooked sablefish
¼ pound bacon, diced
2½ cups boiled potatoes, chopped
1 tablespoon minced onion
1 teaspoon salt 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Fry the bacon until golden brown and crisp. Mix the bits of bacon, sablefish, potatoes, minced onion and seasonings together and place in the pan with the fat. Fry until brown. Fold over and serve like an omelet.

Breakfast Menus (Cont.)

Tomato Juice

Pan-broiled Fish Roe and Bacon

Buttered Toast

Apple Butter

Coffee

Recipes (Cont.)

Pan-broiled Roe and Bacon
(Serves six)

1 pound fish roe
½ pound bacon
1 quart water
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon vinegar

If roe is large, cook for 20 minutes in simmering water to which the salt and vinegar have been added. Be sure that the water covers the roe. Pan-broil the bacon until crisp and drain on absorbent paper. Drain the pre-cooked roe and cook slowly until browned in a little of the bacon fat. Serve roe and bacon on toast.